

Mimulus MEMO

California Native Plant Society
Kern County Chapter
spring 2005

President's Message

Other than the jungle of weeds that are thriving after the rain and finally sun,
there are **sure signs that spring is coming**

The most obvious sign of coming spring is the jungle of weeds in my yard that seems to have exploded in size and numbers overnight. Other, more welcome signs are visible in the buds, leaves and even early flowers. Probably the most wondrous sign is a Gulf Fritillary caterpillar. Last fall the passion vine, nonnative host plant of the Gulf Fritillary, was as usual totally denuded of leaves after several generations of caterpillars had lived on it. The caterpillars that were large enough to pupate did so when all of the vegetation was consumed. In December I noticed one that was less than 2 cm long and the thickness of a toothpick still attached to a dormant stem. I assumed that it was dead, but left it in place. To my amazement as soon as the passion vine's leaves began sprouting, it came to life and began eating. It had survived the freezing temperatures and all of the other winter conditions. It is now 4 cm long!

Often it seems that the challenges of conserving our native plants, plant communities and habitats are increasingly uphill battles that fewer and fewer volunteers are committed to undertaking. Then, one realizes that the plants, the communities and animals, like the Gulf Fritillary caterpillar, are resilient. This does not diminish our need for continued dedication to preserving wild species and places, but the resiliency is a source of continued hope.

I recently submitted a brief article on our Kern County Chapter for the 40th Anniversary Issue of Fremontia. During the process, I realized that I had also submitted the Chapter's article for the 25th Anniversary Issue. It was a time again to reflect on our challenges and accomplishments since the founding of our Chapter in 1982. It has been both inspiring and pleasurable to have worked with such dedicated native plant enthusiasts and professionals over the years.

The 2005 Kern Chapter leadership team will include: Lucy Clark, Ellen Cypher, Debby Kroeger, Eve Laeger, Randi McCormick and Mary Warters who have been committed for a number of years to making the Kern Chapter activities and efforts successful. In addition, we welcome two longtime CNPS members who are relatively new to our Chapter leadership team. We appreciate the willingness of Steve Hampson and Harriet Morris to offer their considerable skills and dedication to our Chapter.

-Laura

Calendar of Field Trips

March 26, Sat
Sand Ridge Preserve

April 6, Wed
Wind Wolves Preserve

April 9, Sat
Maturango Museum
Wildflower Show & walk

April 17, Sun
Hungry Valley Rec Area

April 24, Sun
Mill Creek Mosey

April 30 & May 1
Kern River Valley
Bioregions Festival

May 14, Sat
Walker Pass Walk

June 11, Sat
Somewhere in the Sierra

July 30 & 31
Kern River Valley
Hummingbird Celebration

Mark your calendars!
Read all the details inside.

Field Trip Details: It should be a **great** year for wildflowers and, so, also a great year for those of us who love to get out to see the annual blooms. We have planned a large number of trips this year, with some knowledgeable professionals as our leaders along with some trips where we'll all take our field guides and work together to identify the plants we find. Please join us in learning about and enjoying our California native plants!

Always bring water, snacks, a hat, sunscreen, and layers of clothing for variable weather.

March 26, Sunday Sand Ridge Preserve with Ellen Cypher 8:30am

The plant we hope to see is the Bakersfield Cactus, *Opuntia basilaris* var *treleasei*, among the blooming annuals.

Meet at the Taco Bell at the SE corner of Hwys 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) at 8:30am. If you know the Preserve, you may meet us at the entrance at 9:00am. If you get lost, call Ellen that day at 805-841-4361. Ellen plans a 3 hour, plus or minus visit, although if you want to stay longer, bring a lunch. There are no restrooms. The trail is gradual, and appropriate for children or seniors, and short enough that you could leave early if you want.

April 3, Sunday Carrizo Plains National Monument with Denis Kearns 9:00am

Denis, a BLM botanist, has a long list of possible sites to share with us. Exact sites will depend upon road conditions, plants in bloom, weather, etc. Some possible plants are the desert candle and sage thistle.

Meet at 9:00am at the Bakersfield BLM Office, 3801 Pegasus. (Pegasus is one block east of the intersection of Hwy 65 and 7th Standard Road.) We will park, carpool, and caravan to the Monument for a long day of seeing what grows in what habitat. Bring a lunch and lots of water.

TO ATTEND, PLEASE CONTACT Denis at dkearns@blm.gov or 661-391-6115 as he wants to prepare enough copies of the species list.

April 6, Wednesday Wind Wolves Preserve 9:00am

Meet in the Valley Plaza parking lot next to Wible Rd., west of the movie theater at 9:00am. Plan to carpool to the beautiful Wind Wolves Preserve, and join David Clendenen for our visit to various locations where blooms are occurring. If you are coming from the east side, join us at the entrance to the Preserve at 9:40ish. It is located 9.5 miles west of I-5 on Hwy 166.

TO ATTEND, PLEASE CONTACT Steve Hampson at 661-366-6357 or hampson@ics.uci.edu

April 9, Saturday Ridgecrest's Maturango Museum Wildflower Show and desert walk with Steve Hampson

Meet at the Taco Bell at the SE corner of Hwys 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) at 9:00am, if you want to carpool and save the air! Bring a lunch, or eat in town.

CONTACT Lucy at LucyG391@aol.com if you plan on joining the carpool.

April 17, Sunday Hungry Valley State Vehicle Rec. Area with Kathy Sanders 10:00am

Meet in the Valley Plaza parking lot next to Wible Rd., west of the movie theater, at 10:00am. We will carpool to the Gorman area. For those coming from other areas, go to the Visitors Center at the Gorman Entrance. We will join the regular trip at 11:00am, for a \$4.00 fee per CAR (another reason to car pool). The trip lasts about 3

hours, so bring a lunch. We will visit the grasslands area at about 4,000' by car. If there are no flowers, a Resource Specialist will take us to the Oak Woodland Natural Preserve at a lower elevation.

<http://www.ics.uci.edu/~hampson/cnps/PlantLists/hungry.html>

This visit would require a short hike of 20 minutes.

TO ATTEND, PLEASE CONTACT Steve Hampson at 661-366-6357 or hampson@ics.uci.edu

April 24, SUN. Mill Creek Mosey with Lucy Clark

Meet at Tuesday Morning's parking lot at the corner of Auburn and Fairfax at 11:00am to carpool to the trailhead on Old Kern Canyon Road. OR meet us at the trailhead at 11:30am. We will leisurely walk through the flowers down to Mill Creek to eat a late lunch (bring one), and to search for the reddish California Newt in its most southern habitat. Bring your wildflower field guide and water.

CONTACT Lucy at LucyG391@aol.com if you plan on meeting to carpool.

April 30 to May 1, SAT.-SUN. 11th Annual Kern River Valley Bioregions Festival

Find the events list as of today at <http://kern.audubon.org/bioregionactivities.htm>

Recommended on Saturday are :

Habitat enhancements and stewardship at the Kern River Preserve, donation

An introduction to Global Positional Systems (GPS), donation

The evening presentation by Fletcher Linton, USFS Botanist

Recommended on Sunday are:

Nature Tour of the Bioregions, \$25.00(all day)

Hillsides in Bloom, \$15

Traditional Uses of Native Plants, donation

Check out these and all other trips and activities provided by our Audubon Preserve, and register, NOW as these trips have limits on the number of participants.

May 14, SAT. Walker Pass 10:00am

Join us, with your wildflower field guide, at the Walker Pass Historical Monument at 10:00am. We'll wander, looking for flowers to identify and photograph. Bring a lunch.

TO ATTEND, PLEASE CONTACT Lucy Clark at LucyG391@aol.com or 661-391-9302

June 11, SAT. Somewhere in the Sierra! with Eve Laeger 10:30am

Meeting places for both carpooling and the trip location will be posted on our new link to the CNPS web site, as the date nears, to ensure seeing plants in bloom. Or contact Steve or Lucy as above.

July 30-31, SAT.-SUN. 7th Annual Kern Valley Hummingbird Celebration

Highly recommended for the opportunity to hold a tiny bird in your hand for its release, and the trip to a Penstemon Meadow high above the Kern River Preserve.

For info go to <http://kern.audubon.org> or call 760-378-3044.

Well, this is what we have planned for now if you have any ideas for other trips, please let Steve or I know, and we'll try to get everyone informed. This looks like the year to see wonderful blooms. Death Valley is already spectacular! I look forward to seeing you on one of these trips. -Lucy

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Our annual plant sale last October was another success. The club made over \$700.00 and gained half dozen members. THANKS to those of you who helped set-up, sell and clean-up. There is no way this sale could take place without your efforts. Thanks, too, to Lucy for making all those phone calls.

A list of “leftover” plants was sent out in November many of the plants are still available. If you are just now getting into *gardening mode*, call Debby at 872-2256 x12 to see about making a purchase. Most plants are in 1 gallon pots. There are a few trees and flannelbush in 5 gallon pots. All are getting new growth and would like to be freed from their pots.

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Dear Desert Wildflower Enthusiasts.
This year has already started for wildflowers in the California Desert. Don't take my word...look at the photos at <http://www.desertusa.com/wildflo/ca.html>.

Two field trips have been scheduled for this year. The first is a serious botanical expedition March 20-25 at the Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center. 4-wd is required and moderate hiking is likely. There are only 10 parking spaces and half have already been reserved. CNPS has reserved the Norris Camp cabin. If you are interested in this trip please contact me ASAP to reserve your spot. We are limited to number of cars, not people, so please don't drive alone if

possible. Some botanizing destinations include Caruthers Canyon and the Kelso Dunes.

The second is the annual CNPS field trip to Joshua Tree National Park, April 22-24. Camping spaces are limited for this trip also, as we were lucky enough to reserve the "private" Lost Horse Campground near Hidden Valley. For those who can get away before the weekend, the trip starts with bird watching at Big Morongo Preserve on Friday morning followed by a caravan through the park to look at wildflowers on our way to the campsite. Saturday will include a botanical field trip to a selected destination. Sunday will include driving south unless the flowers are already done in the south part of the park.

Please send your "reservation" to naturebase@aol.com and you'll receive a confirmation with details as the trip date nears.

Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition (IWAC)

works to educate individuals and organizations on steps they can take to protect land, such as learning more about invasive weeds, recognizing plants that are out of place, and alerting appropriate local agencies to their presence. IWAC also hopes to teach people how to responsibly select noninvasive plants for landscaping and prevent inadvertent transportation of invasive plant species or their seeds to new areas.

A recently enacted law is expected to significantly strengthen the fight against invasive weeds in the United States, helping restore native plants and ecosystems nationwide. Signed last October by President Bush, the Noxious Weed Control Act enables the Secretary of Agriculture's office to assist eligible weed management agencies in responding to noxious weed problems on public and private lands.

Invasive plant species infest an estimated 100 million acres across the United States. Invasive plant species displace native species by a rate of eight to 20 percent each year, often causing serious environmental problems. For example, thirsty invasive brush such as saltcedar is capable of consuming as much as 300 gallons of water a day. In comparison, the average American household uses about 8,000 gallons of water per month.

Our official Kern CNPS web site at <http://www.cnps.org/chapters/kern/> has gotten a bit age-challenged, in that all of the "upcoming events" happened several years ago. The problem is that our current web hosting arrangement doesn't allow easy access to update the site. However, this year, we have some

upcoming events **in the future** so until a better arrangement for the official page is worked out, we are putting up an adjunct web page that we can easily modify. It is at

<http://www.ics.uci.edu/~hampson/kcnps/>

While at this point it is just a collection of links that may be of interest to our local CNPS group, it does have a "field trips" section that will be filled in soon, or may be already by the time you read this. Lucy Clark has done an amazing job of lining up a series of field trips for what promises to be an amazing spring, so keep an eye on that location.

And, while you are there, check out the rest of the site. In addition to updating the web page more frequently, it has been suggested that we try out a "news flash" email option for information with a very short shelf life (eg, nearby rare plant sightings), or last minute field trips to see a nearby rare plant). This is just an experiment for now, but if you are interested in participating, include your email address on the mail-in ballot, or send it to

hampson@ics.uci.edu with a subject of "news flash". Then, if you would like to share something with the CNPS-flashers group, email that information to hampson@ics.uci.edu and it will be posted on the web page and forwarded to everyone on the group list. That way you won't have to check the web page daily to see if something rare has been spotted. If this proves to be popular it might be upgraded to an automatic list-server. Hopefully this won't add significantly to your existing spam load, but if we get too many fiddleneck sightings for example, we may not forward *everything*.

It is official . . .
the state grass of California is
Nassella pulchra.

Govenor Schwarzenegger signed SB 1226 on August 23, 2004 making the designation official. Purple needlegrass is endemic to California in the Central Valley and surrounding foothills, central coast and south to San Diego County. It is a major grassland species.

multiple uses as you work on projects including making cordage and processing and preparing edible plants." \$65.00
For information contact Earth Skills, 1113 Cougar Court, Frazier Park, CA 93225; 661-245-0318;
www.earthskills.org

The Kern County Archeological Society presents an educational 2 day tour, April 9 & 10, of the natural history and pre-history of the southern Sierra Nevadas and the western Mojave Desert: botany, geology, hydrology, ethnology and archeology. \$100 per person (\$90 is tax-deductible). RSVP by 4-1-05.

For more information and reservations:
Alan Gold at avram1952@yahoo.com or
559-243-8186.

A Plant Uses class will be taught by Earth Skills on April 13, July 14 and again on September 11. As you use native plants "you begin to know not only their names, but their personality and how and where they grow. In this one-day class you will get to know intimately local plants with

Calochortus kennedyi

from "California Desert Flowers" by
Sia and Emil Morhardt
University of California Press, 2004

Calochortus kennedyi (desert mariposa lily) is a car-stopper (even at 70 mph) with brilliant coloring that varies from intense yellow to radiant red. Most often petals are electric orange with an almost black spot (the nectary, or nectar-producing gland) at the base of each petal.

Sepals are narrow and greenish. Up to six flowers may grow on a single stem, standing straight up to boldly announce their location. It can be very exciting to find a population, since they do not flower every year and are seldom abundant. The species was named for William L. Kennedy (c. 1827), who collected specimens for botanist who described it.

There is a reasonable chance that we will see *C. kennedyi* and *C. venustus* on our Hungry Valley field trip. Check out the plant list at <http://www.ics.uci.edu/~hampson/cnps/PlantLists/hungry.html>

CNPS – Kern County Chapter
P O Box 9622
Bakersfield, CA 93389-9622

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.

OFFICIAL CNPS KERN CHAPTER BALLOT

Although voting in an uncontested election may not seem necessary, an election is required by our bylaws. Please vote as an expression of confidence and support for those who are willing to serve as volunteer officers in our chapter.

President _____ Lucy Clark

Vice president _____ Debby Kroeger

Treasurer _____ Harriett Morris

Secretary _____ Laura Stockton

Please return your ballot by March 30, 2005 to:
CNPS Kern Chapter
P O Box 9622
Bksfld, CA 93389-9622

Thank you.

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Would you like to be included in our "news flash" email list??

If "yes", provide your email address here:

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Kern CNPS Committee Chairs

Membership Ellen Cypher ecypher@bak.rr.net 398-2201

Newsletter Editor Steve Hampson hampson@ics.uci.edu 366-6357

Conservation Randi McCormick randi@mccormickbiologicalinc.com

Rare Plant Coordinator Eve Laeger laeger@lightspeed.net 760-379-3360

Education Laura Stockton lastockton@sbcglobal.net 831-2325

Plant Sale Debby Kroeger decay@att.net 323-4259
& Randi McCormick 589-4065

Plant Communities Mary Warters 589-9224

Field Trips Lucy Clark LucyG391@aol.com 391-9302